Extension of Fare Concession Banefits to Senior Citizens

310. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received demands for extending the fare-concession benefits permissible to senior citizens in respect of different classes of rail travel above the second class travel and also to raise the concession to 50%.

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) the estimated loss of revenue per annum, in case the fare concession to senior citizens are extended in respect of the travels upto the second AC two-tier and three tier?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Railways are already granting 25% concession in second and sleeper class without any distance limit to senior citizens of the age of 65 years and above, as a special case despite diminishing budgetary support. If the concession to senior citizens is extended to higher classes, the estimated loss of revenue would be approximately Rs. 70 crores per annum. Keeping in mind the increasing cost of operation, maintenance of trains, etc., any further relaxation is not possible due to financial constraints.

Welfare Schemes for Workers

311. SHRI GORDHANBHAI JAVIA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of workers in organised sector in Gujarat;

(b) whether the Government have agreed to provide funds for the welfare schemes taken by the State Government for the workers during 1995-96;

(c) if so, the details of schemes implemented alongwith the assistance provided therefor; and

(d) the schemes awaiting central assistance?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (d). The information is being collected from the Government of Gujarat and will be laid on the table of the House.

Declaration and Inclusion of Certain Places in Tourist Spots

312. SHRI SUKH LAL KUSHWAHA :
SHRI HARIVANSH SAHAI :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government are considering to declare and include the historical and philosophical places like Chitrakut, Amarkantak, Devtalab and Maihar of Madhya Pradesh and Ayodhya hills of Parulia in the list of the tourist spots to attract the foreign tourists;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) to (c) Declaration of Tourist Spots is primarily the responsibility of the State Government, however the Department of Tourism extends financial assistance for specific projects to the State Governments based on their merits, inter-se priority and availability of funds. The Department of Tourism has provided funds for the construction of a Cafetaria, a Yatri Niwas at Chitrakut and a Yatrika at Amarkantak.

Tourism Infrastructure in Ajanta and Ellora

313. SHRI UTTAMSINGH PAWAR : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken to strengthen the tourism infrastructure in Ajanta and Ellora and the expenditure incurred as a result thereof during the last two years;

(b) the income earned during the last two years on account of visits of tourists to Ajanta and Ellora caves;

(c) whether the National Park Services of USA has prepared any plan for the development of these caves;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the time by which the said development plan is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) The Government has entered into a Loan Agreement with the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) Japan in January, 1992 for Conservation and Development of Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra. The OECF assistance is to the tune of 3.7 billion Japanese Yen, the Project is expected to be completed by December, 1996. The major components of the project are afforestation, upgradation of aerodrome facilities at Aurangabad, strengthening of roads, augmentation of water supply and sewerage, improvement of electricity supply, conservation of monuments and visitor management facilities. The OECF loan is not available in advance. The implementing agencies i.e. State Governments have to first incur expenditure from their own resources and then claim reimbursement from the OECF.

Rs. 18.98 crores for Ajanta Ellora project has already been reimbursed by OECF.

(b) The income earned as per information provided by the Archaeological Survey of India is as follows;

1994-95	Rs. 3,64,808
1995-96	Rs. 4,53,038